

EVENTS

- 1495
- 1500 **1499–1500 Amerigo Vespucci**, Italian sailor, explores coast of what is now Venezuela on a Spanish expedition. His reports make it clear for first time that there is a large, unknown continental landmass between Europe and East Asia. It is named America after him
- 1510 **1500 Portuguese explorer Pedro Alvares Cabral**, blown off course while exploring African coast, is carried by strong currents across Atlantic. Discovers what is later called Brazil and claims it for Portugal in accordance with **Treaty of Tordesillas** (1494 treaty partitioning world into Spanish and Portuguese colonial empires, giving possession of islands discovered to west or east of a line 370 leagues (c. 1000 miles) west of Azores to Spain and Portugal respectively)
- 1520 **1519–1521 Spanish conquistador (conqueror-colonist), Hernán Cortés**, establishes city of Vera Cruz (Villa Rica de Vera Cruz) on coast of what is now Mexico and conquers Aztec Empire.
- 1530 **1519–1521 Portuguese Ferdinand Magellan** explores eastern coast of South America in Spanish-funded attempt to reach India around southern tip of new continent. He enters Pacific by way of Strait of Magellan, so pioneering southwest route to Asia
- 1540
- 1550 **1526 Sebastian Cabot** (son of John Cabot, discoverer of North America) on a Spanish expedition explores east coast of Brazil and course of Plate, Paraná, and Paraguay Rivers, searching for a route to Pacific
- 1560 **1531–1535 Spanish conquistador, Francisco Pizarro**, lands on west coast of South America and conquers Inca Empire in what is now Peru. He founds city of Lima
- 1570 **c. 1519–1554 South America is explored by Spanish nobles, adventurers, and missionaries in search of gold, esteem, and new peoples to convert to Christianity**
- 1580 **1578 English Captain Francis Drake** explores west coast of South America on circumnavigation of globe

